

Enquiry Experience Tracker



2025 Enquiry Experience Tracker

Summary of international student mystery shopping results
for Example University

2025 Enquiry Experience Tracker

The Enquiry Experience Tracker is a syndicated global mystery shopping program designed to help colleges and universities understand how well they respond to enquiries from international prospects.

Posing as prospective international students, our global team of mystery shoppers place course enquiries through key channels and score the responses.

Our experts analyse and benchmark the experiences against local and global competitors so institutions can better understand their performance.

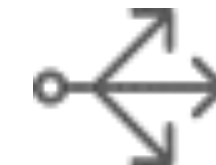
103

**Institutions
from 5
countries**



6

**Enquiry
channels**



50

**Assessment
criteria**



7

**Student
personas**



Developed by Edified and UniQuest

The Enquiry Experience Tracker is reassuringly powered by education experts Edified, and informed by the latest student behaviour and conversion insights from UniQuest.



Edified is a specialised consulting firm focused exclusively on the education industry.

We 'get' the business of education like no-one else, helping education providers and government bodies solve a wide range of challenges.

From marketing and admissions to pricing and student experience, we'll untangle your most complex problems and give you the confidence and clarity to take action.

edified.ca



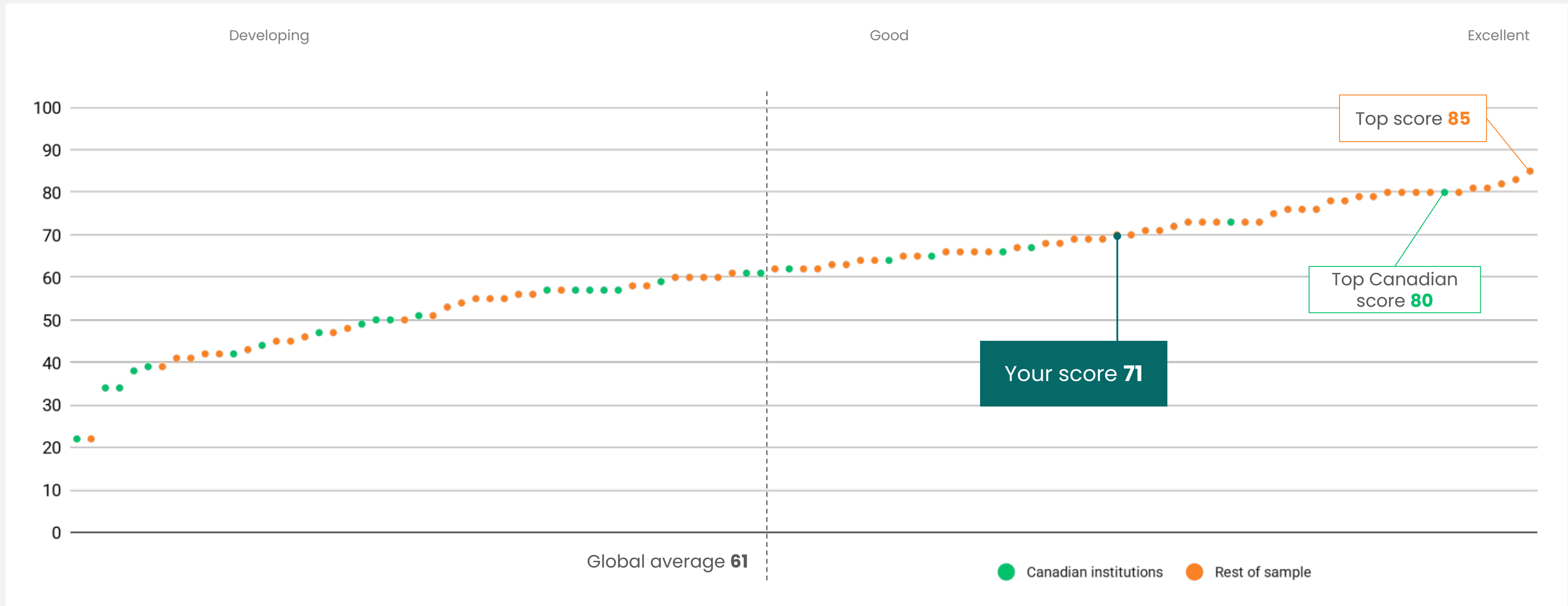
UniQuest partners with higher education institutions to bring all the capabilities needed to deliver personalised student engagement journeys at scale and without interruption, no matter what.

Acting as an extension of your Student Recruitment team, we apply the insights, an expert team, and the technology platform to deliver proactive and personal support for every international student. Our proven approach maximises conversion at every step from enquiry to enrolment.


uni-quest.co.uk


How you place among the global field

2025 Enquiry Experience Scores

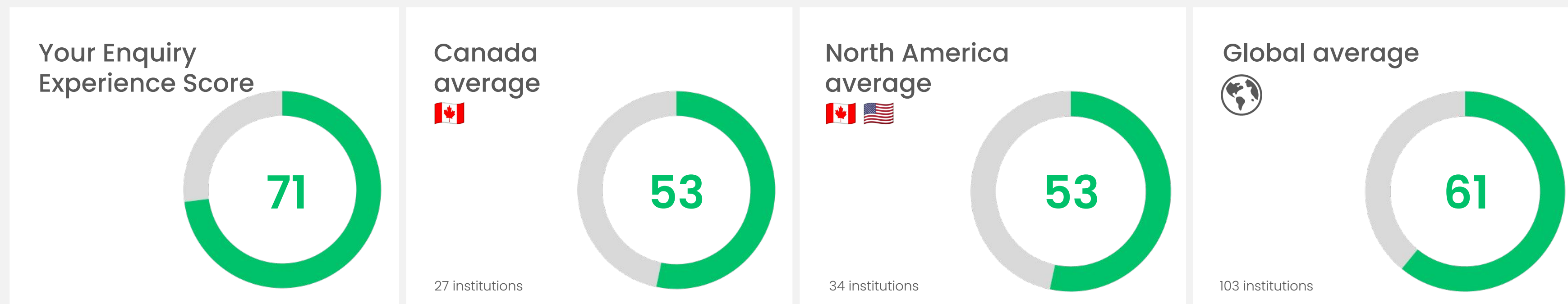


Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

 103 institutions worldwide
Scores range from 18 to 85

 27 institutions from Canada
33% were above the global average

Summary of overall results



Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Choosing where to study is a big decision. Students face a flood of information from websites, rankings, social media and agents as they weigh their options and try to find the right fit.

When a student contacts a university, it's a key moment. These interactions build trust, answer critical questions and help move a student closer to their decision. How you respond can leave a lasting impression. With shifting visa policies and changing destination preferences, strong service is more than a courtesy; it can be the difference between winning or losing a student.

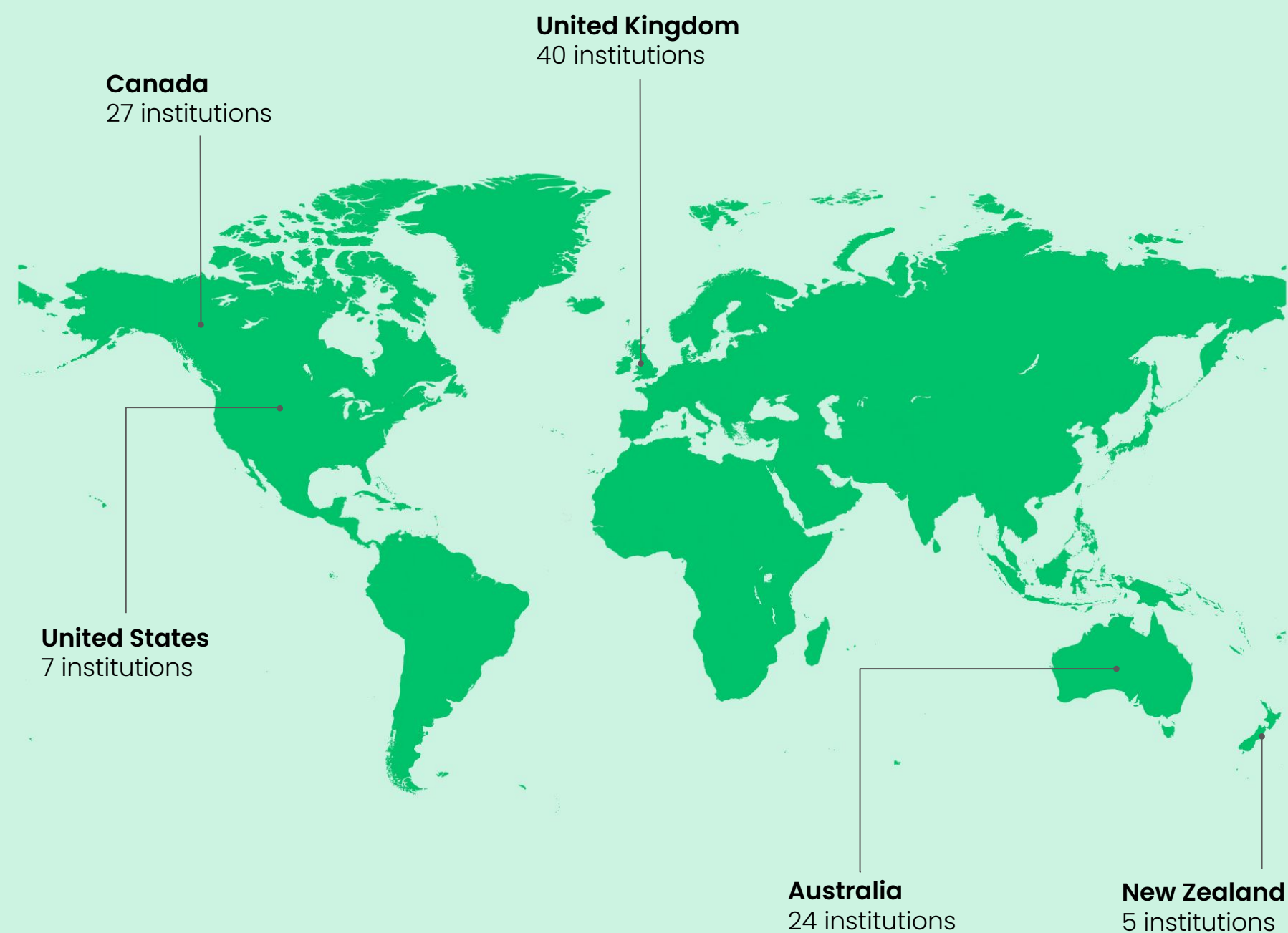
Generally, institutions in Canada are less competitive on a global scale, performing below the global average. The average Enquiry Experience Score for Canada is **53 out of 100**.

Example University has achieved an Enquiry Experience Score of **71 out of 100**, indicating it is performing better than most in Canada. The score suggests that Example University is doing well to meet student needs, but still has an opportunity to improve and deliver excellence in all aspects of the enquiry experience.

Research methodology

Research methodology

Scope

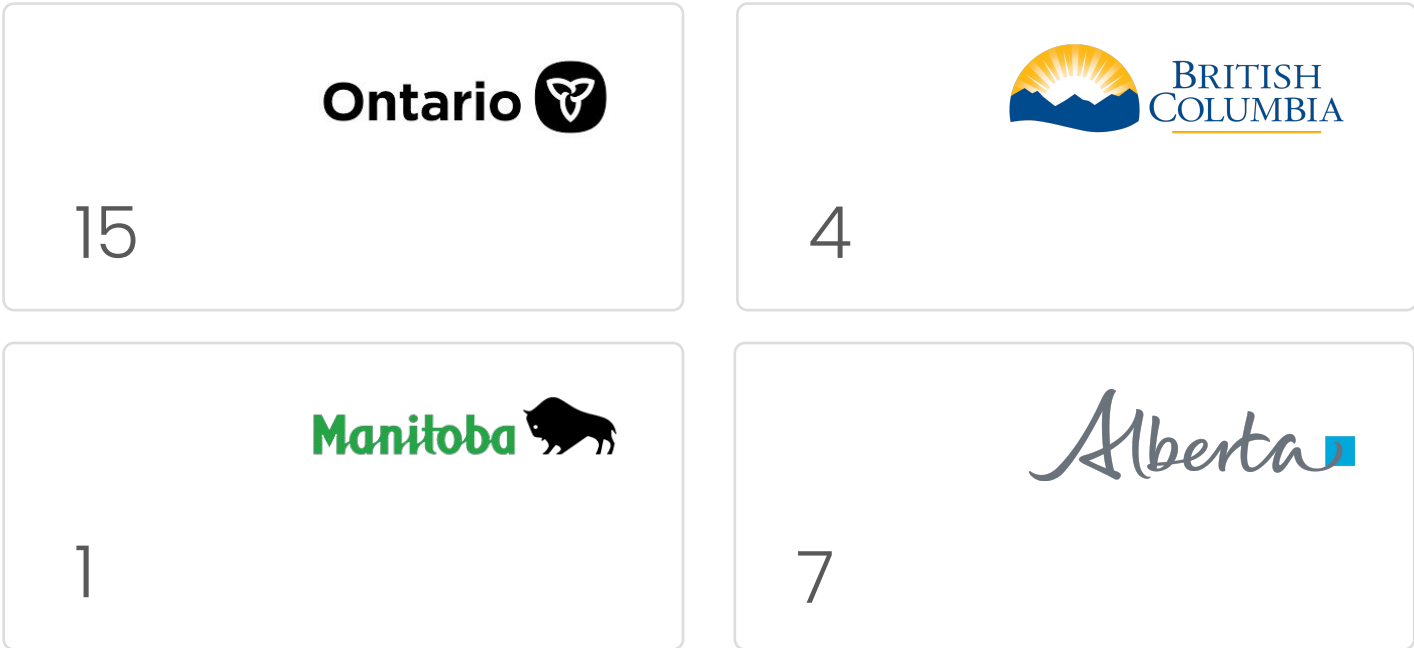


The Enquiry Experience Tracker is a global mystery shopping program.

The 2025 research round included a total of 103 colleges and universities worldwide.

27 of these institutions are located in Canada, including more than one third of higher education institutions in Ontario.

The sample has a broad geographic spread and includes institutions of different sizes and types, and from various groupings.



Refer to the Appendix for a list of institutions.

Research methodology






















Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping was conducted globally between April and June 2025 using seven prospective student personas.

Institutions were able to select six of the seven personas illustrated here. Where requested, minor changes were made to the personas to suit the needs of individual institutions.

Mystery shoppers posed as prospective students and enquired to each institution using a range of channels, including web enquiry form, peer-to-peer and phone.

Mystery shoppers followed scripts and guidelines provided by Edified to conduct the fieldwork and evaluate the enquiry experience. These evaluations were compiled, validated and scored by Edified.

						
FINAL YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT	UNIVERSITY STUDENT	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	ONSHORE SIBLING	RECENT UNIVERSITY GRADUATE	PARENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT	WORKING PROFESSIONAL
						
KENYA	CHINA	INDIA	NEPAL	PHILIPPINES	MEXICO	GERMANY
						
PEER TO PEER	ENQUIRY FORM	WHATSAPP	PHONE	LIVE CHAT	EMAIL	EMAIL

Example University selected the Standard registration package in 2025. This included 18 mystery shopping enquiries (three for each persona). Example University selected all personas except for Germany.

Research methodology

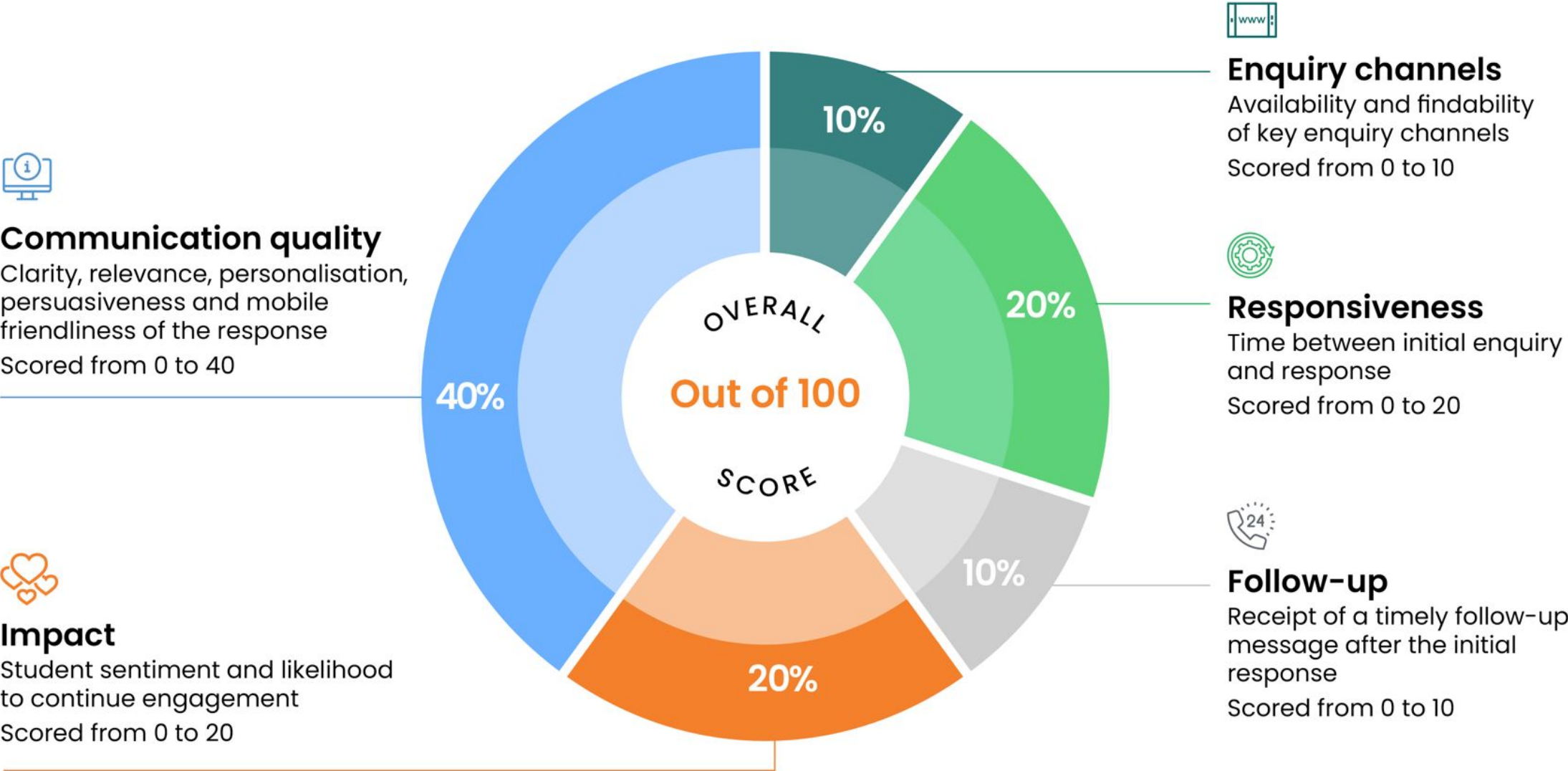
Scoring

Mystery shopping outputs are analysed and assessed against 51 criteria, including findability, responsiveness, clarity and personalisation. The scoring methodology has been informed by data from more than two million journeys managed by UniQuest and reflects today's standard for effective student engagement.

Scores for each criterion are weighted according to the model on the right, to provide an overall Enquiry Experience Score for each institution.

The scores in this report are based on the experiences of the mystery shoppers, who report what happened as it happened. It may not reflect the typical or intended enquiry experience at each institution.

Mystery shopping is an effective way to gain student perspectives, but we recommend that this report is used in conjunction with other information (such as student satisfaction surveys, interaction rates and internal quality assurance) to fully evaluate the effectiveness of your enquiry management approach.



Refer to the Appendix for definitions and our assumptions

Research methodology

Benchmarking

The Enquiry Experience Tracker includes sector benchmarking so that institutions can understand their performance compared with competitors’.

Country average

This benchmark represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all sampled institutions from a given country.



State or regional average

This benchmark represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all sampled institutions from a given state/province (e.g. Ontario) or region (e.g. North America).

Group average

This benchmark represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all sampled institutions from a particular grouping (e.g. Russell Group).

Global average

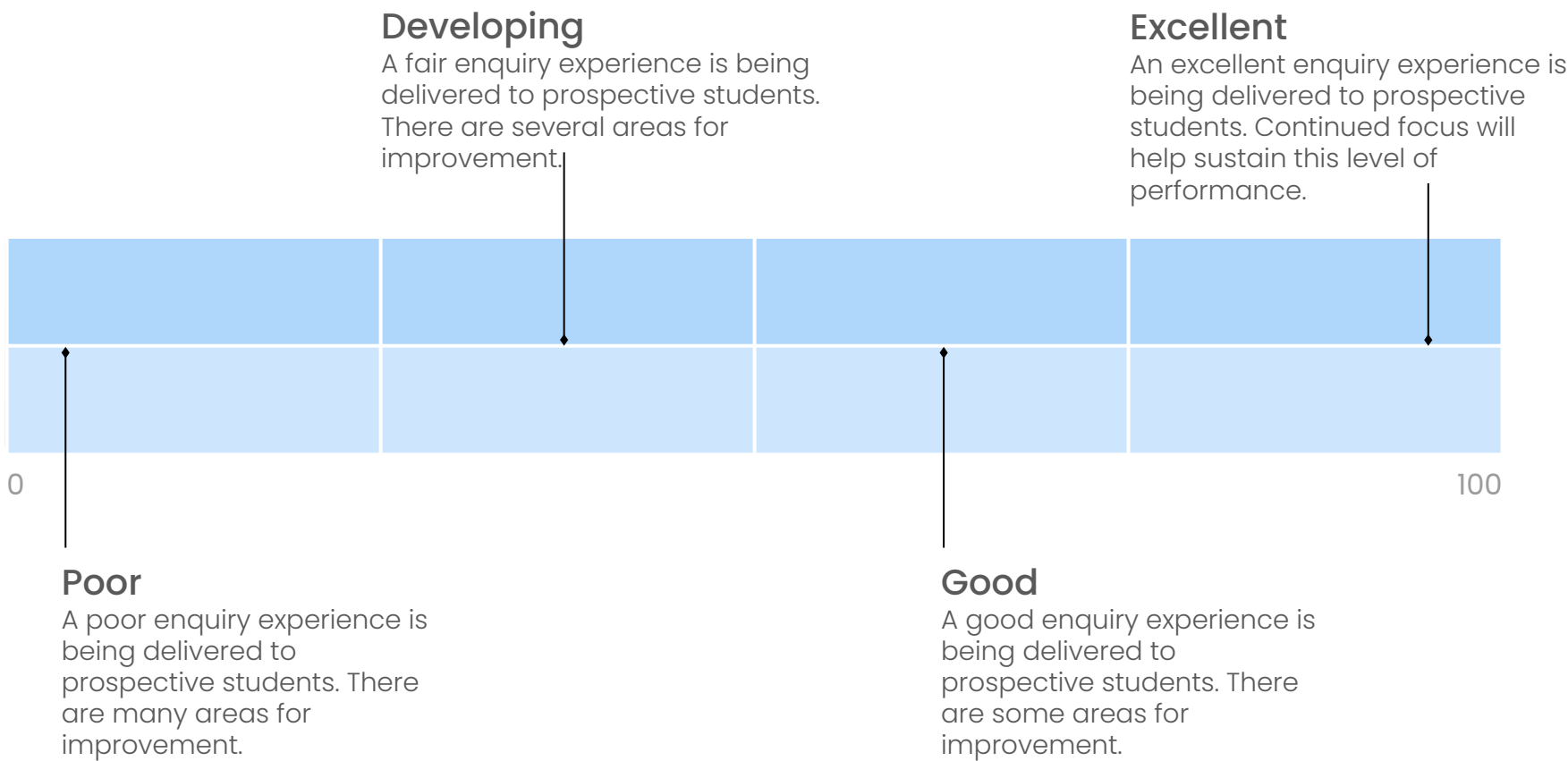
This is the secondary benchmark used in this report. It represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all institutions in the global sample.



Our standard of excellence

The Enquiry Experience Tracker also includes benchmarking against our standard of excellence. The below scale is used in this report to indicate whether an institution’s performance is poor, developing, good or excellent in a particular area.

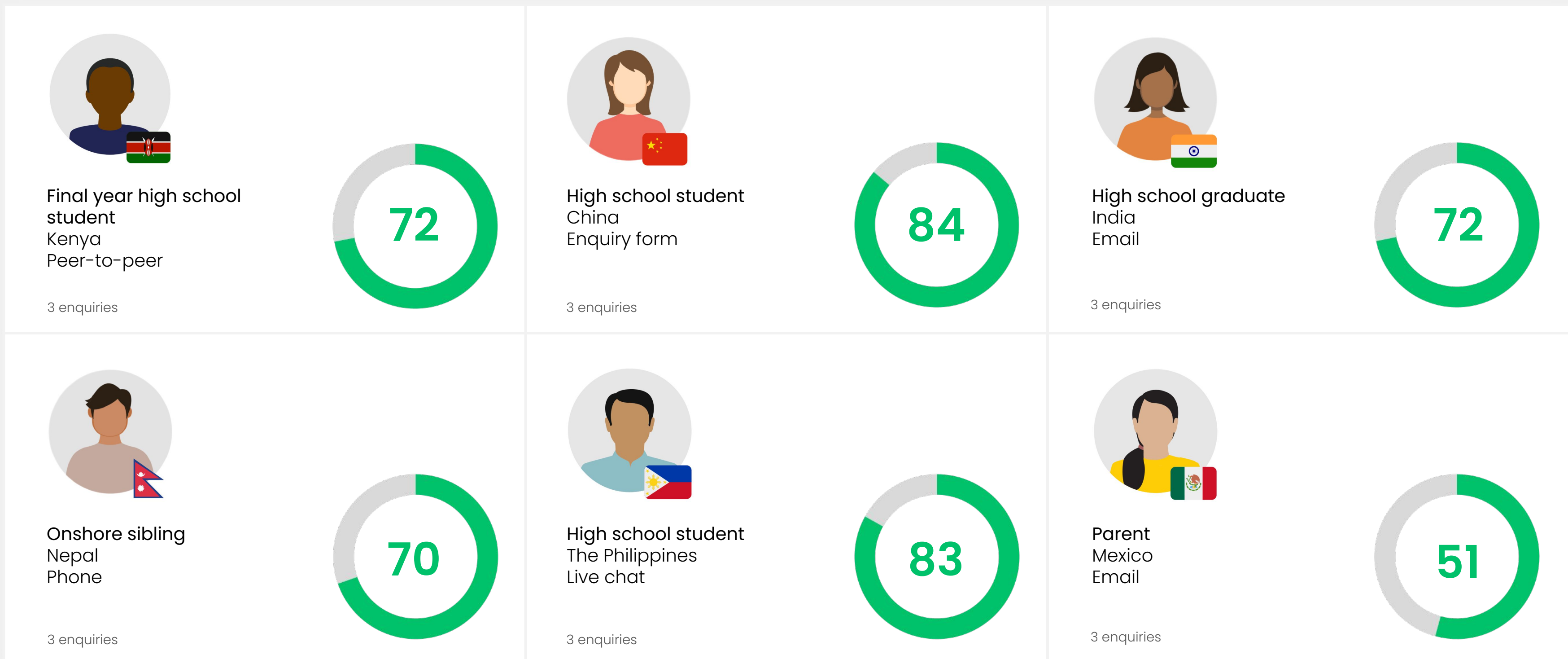
The standard is a measure informed by Edified's expertise in student communication, and insights from UniQuest’s conversion and student satisfaction data.



Your results

Your results by persona

Below are the average scores Example University has achieved for each persona.



Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry

Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score	72	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>Final year high school student Kenya Peer-to-peer</div>		xx	✓	xx	29 April 2025	30 April 2025	✗	87
		xx	✓	xx	18 May 2025	19 May 2025	✗	51
		xx	✓	xx	6 June 2025	6 June 2025	✗	79

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry

Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score	84	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>High school student China Enquiry form</div>		xx	✓	xx	11 May 2025	12 May 2025	✓	85
		xx	✓	xx	13 May 2025	15 May 2025	✓	86
		xx	✓	xx	14 June 2025	18 June 2025	✓	81

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry

Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score72	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>High school graduate India WhatsApp</div>	xx	✓	xx	29 Apr 2025	29 Apr 2025	✗	78
	xx	✓	xx	2 May 2025	2 May 2025	✗	59
	xx	✓	xx	19 May 2025	20 May 2025	✗	78

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry


Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score	70	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>Onshore sibling Nepal Phone</div>		xx	✓	xx	3 May 2025	3 May 2025	✗	67
		xx	✓	xx	13 May 2025	13 May 2025	✗	70
		xx	✓	xx	30 May 2025	30 May 2025	✗	72

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry

Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score	83	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>High school student The Philippines Live chat</div>		xx	✓	xx	28 Apr 2025	28 Apr 2025	✗	81
		xx	✓	xx	13 May 2025	13 May 2025	✓	83
		xx	✓	xx	14 June 2025	14 June 2025	✗	85

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by enquiry

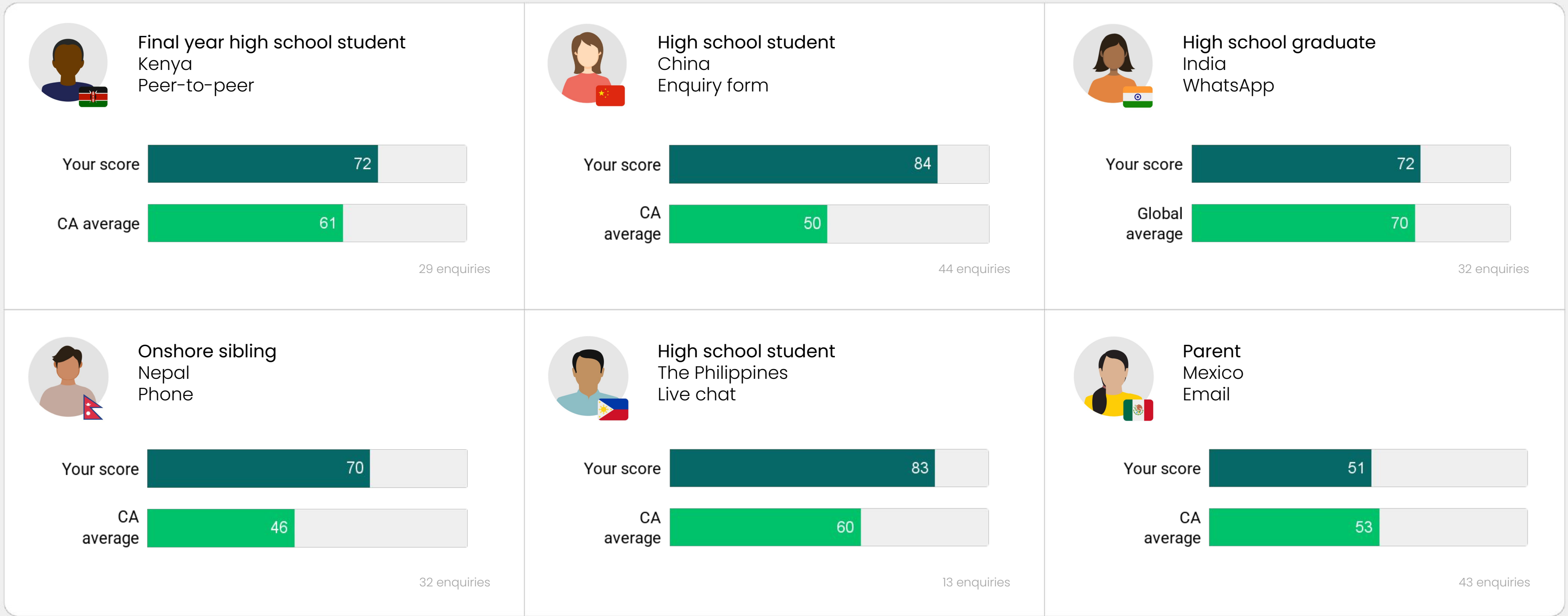
Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes recorded for Example University by mystery shopping enquiry.

Persona score	51	Mystery shopper contact details	Enquiry made	Contact point	Enquiry date	Response received	Follow-up received	Enquiry score
<div></div> <div>Parent Mexico Email</div>		xx	✓	xx	30 Apr 2025	1 May 2025	✓	86
		xx	✓	xx	21 May 2025	21 May 2025	✗	68
		xx	✓	xx	12 June 2025	✗	✗	This score is <20 because no response was received.

Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

How your results compare

Below are the scores Example University has achieved for each persona compared with the Canada (CA) average.



Scores are out of 100 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your results by criteria

The overall Enquiry Experience Score is out of 100. It is a total of the scores achieved in each of the criteria assessed: enquiry channels, responsiveness, communication quality, follow-up and impact.

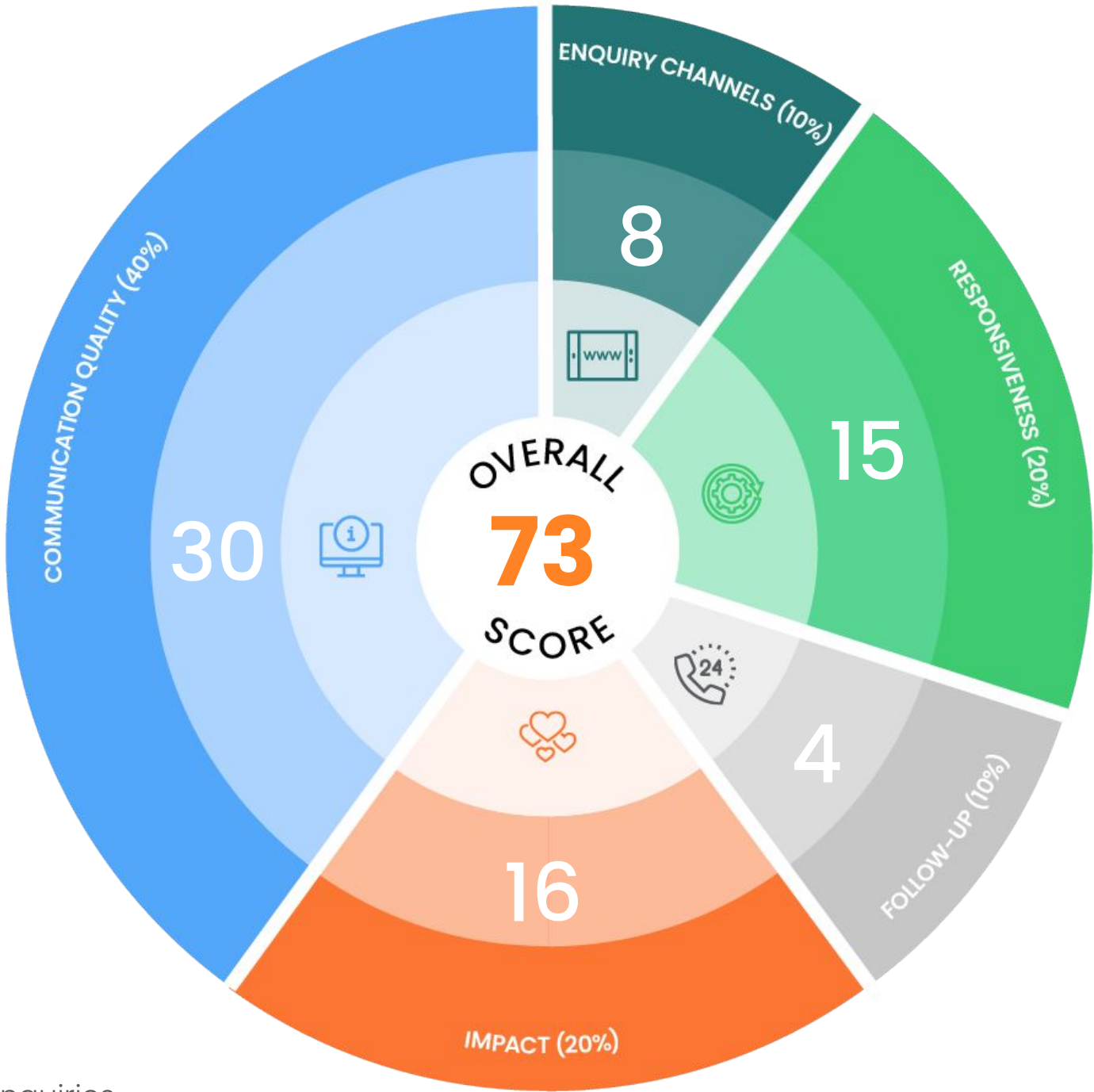
Example University scored well in most categories. From the student perspective, the college's enquiry function appears to be operating effectively and delivers a good experience in most aspects of the enquiry process.

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.

-4

Lost opportunity

When calculating your overall score, points were lost for enquiries that did not get a response. We estimate your overall score could have been **4 points higher** if every enquiry received a response.



Key findings

- A very good score was achieved for enquiry channels. All students had a positive impression of the institution's website and found it easy to place the enquiry.
- The lowest scoring area was follow up, as most enquiries did not receive any further communication after the initial resolution. Students enquiring through the enquiry form were most likely to receive a follow-up from the university.
- While communication quality scored highly, there is an opportunity to improve the warmth and persuasiveness of communication with prospective students.

Your score for enquiry channels

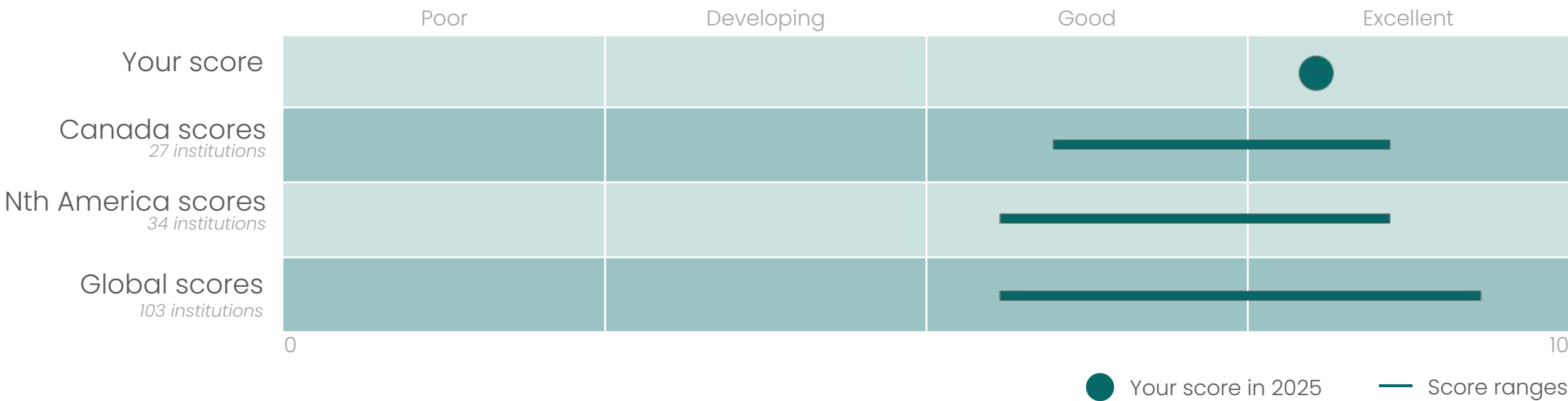
This criteria measures the availability and findability of enquiry channels for prospective students.

Consideration was given to the range of enquiry channels offered by the institution: email, web forms, phone, live chat, peer-to-peer, social media and options for mobile messaging.

Mystery shoppers were asked to indicate how easy it was to find contact information on each institution's website and whether they were able to locate the correct details.

Scores are out of 10 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

How your score compares



Key findings

- Example University scored within the ‘excellent’ range for enquiry channels. This score is close to the top of the Canada and North America ranges, and equal to the global benchmark.
- Example University offers students a range of communication channels. While email, enquiry form, peer-to-peer and phone enquiries are well-serviced, messaging options via WeChat are currently under consideration.
- All mystery shoppers had a positive impression of the Example University website, and found contact details were well signposted and easy to access. Placing the enquiry was a quick and simple process.

- Few institutions in Canada offer WhatsApp as an enquiry channel, with only 1 in 5 institutions doing so compared with 1 in 3 globally. UK institutions are leading the way, with half using WhatsApp – twice as many as last year.
- Even when WhatsApp is offered, the contact number is not always published prominently on institution websites. Two-thirds of students were unable to locate WhatsApp details – either because they were buried deep in content pages, or other times not published at all.
- Globally, the mix of enquiry channels offered to prospective students remains similar to previous years. UK institutions offer the widest range of enquiry channels among competitors globally, reflecting a strong commitment to student recruitment.

“Less than 30 seconds and just one click to find the webform – super straightforward.”

– China mystery shopper

Your score for responsiveness

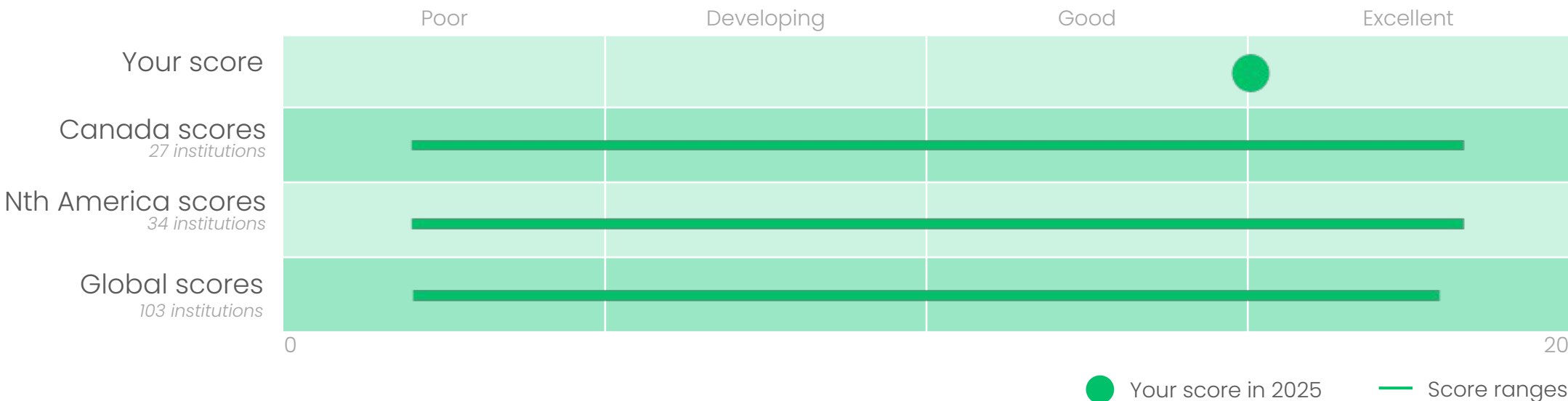
This criteria measures how quickly your institution responds to enquiries from prospective students.

Mystery shoppers were asked to record the time taken before they heard back from someone who could help with their enquiry (i.e. an actual response, not an automated reply).

Maximum points were awarded for instant connection for live chat, responses with two business hours for asynchronous chat (e.g. social media, peer-to-peer) and four business hours for email-based communication.

Scores are out of 20 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

How your score compares



Key findings

- Example University’s score for responsiveness landed just within the ‘excellent’ range. The score is towards the upper end of the Canada, North America and global ranges.
- Out of 18 enquiries placed to Example University, 17 received a response and 12 of these were in an excellent time frame – less than two business days for most email and web form responses, and in a matter of hours for peer-to-peer. This was viewed very positively by students who described the speed of service as “super quick”, “very fast” and “excellent”.
- Half of the enquiries received an auto-response. All students enquiring by web form and peer-to-peer received an auto-reply, while email, WhatsApp and phone enquirers did not.

- Canadian institutions can be relatively quick to answer international student enquiries, but response rates aren’t consistent. 1 in 4 students didn’t hear back within the period allowed by this research (three weeks for emails, 15 minutes for live channels and one week for WhatsApp and peer-to-peer). Among those that received a reply, nearly half were answered in best practice timeframes.
- At a global level, more mystery shoppers received responses to their enquiries than in previous years. Only 15% of enquiries went unanswered.
- WhatsApp was the most reliable channel – all students received a reply and 80% were within two business hours. Email and peer-to-peer channels were less satisfying, as 1 in 5 students didn’t hear back on enquiries through these channels.

“The response time was great as they replied quickly, which made me feel acknowledged and showed that the institution values timely communication.”

– Kenya mystery shopper

Your score for communication quality

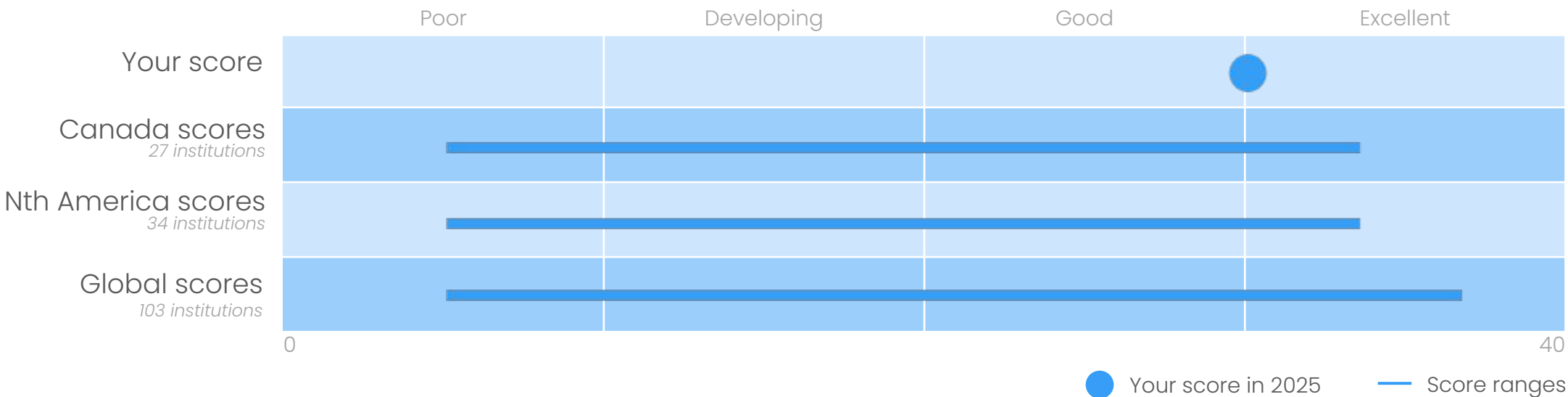
This criteria measures the standard of the content in your communications.

Consideration was given to the clarity, relevance, personalisation and persuasiveness of each communication.

Mystery shoppers were asked to assess how easy the communication was to understand and how well the information was tailored to their context and enquiry. Consideration was given to tone of voice, helpfulness of the response, and how well institutions engaged and inspired students to take the next step.

Scores are out of 40 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

How your score compares



Key findings

- Example University scored better than most institutions in Canada and North America for communication quality, and among the best in the global sample.
- Mystery shoppers typically rated communication from Example University as clear, helpful and relevant. 2 in 3 rated the communications as warm and friendly, and 82% said that Example University answered all their questions.
- Fewer than half of the responses mentioned any positive points about Example University or the student’s course of interest, or contained inspiring content such as videos and events to persuade prospects to continue engaging.
- Students liked learning that it was free to apply, and receiving information about scholarships and the co-op and paid work experience opportunities.

- Around half of the responses from Canadian institutions were rated ‘excellent’ and very few as ‘poor’ – a similar result to institutions in the UK.
- While replies were friendlier than last year, Canadian institutions still missed chances to influence. Only 60% of responses offered value-add information to students, and less than half included selling points or inspiring content. Results highlight an opportunity to do more to keep students engaged and motivate them to take next steps.
- Globally, most institutions improved their communications in the last year – delivering on essentials and influence. Nearly 80% of responses were tailored to students’ study interests or country and 60% went the extra mile to include bonus information to help students. Students appear to value this level of detail, with only 1 in 20 saying they received too much information.

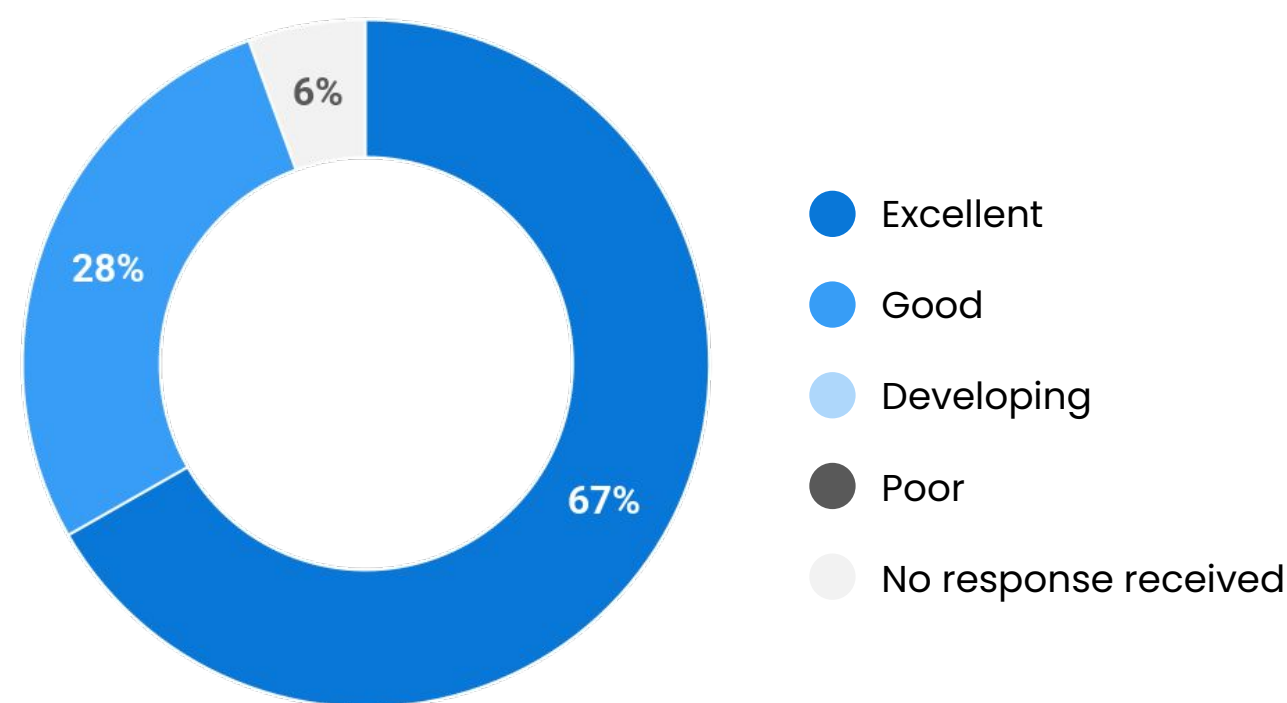
“The response was informative and covered everything I needed. It was encouraging and well-tailored.”

– The Philippines mystery shopper

Your score for communication quality

How effective were your communications?

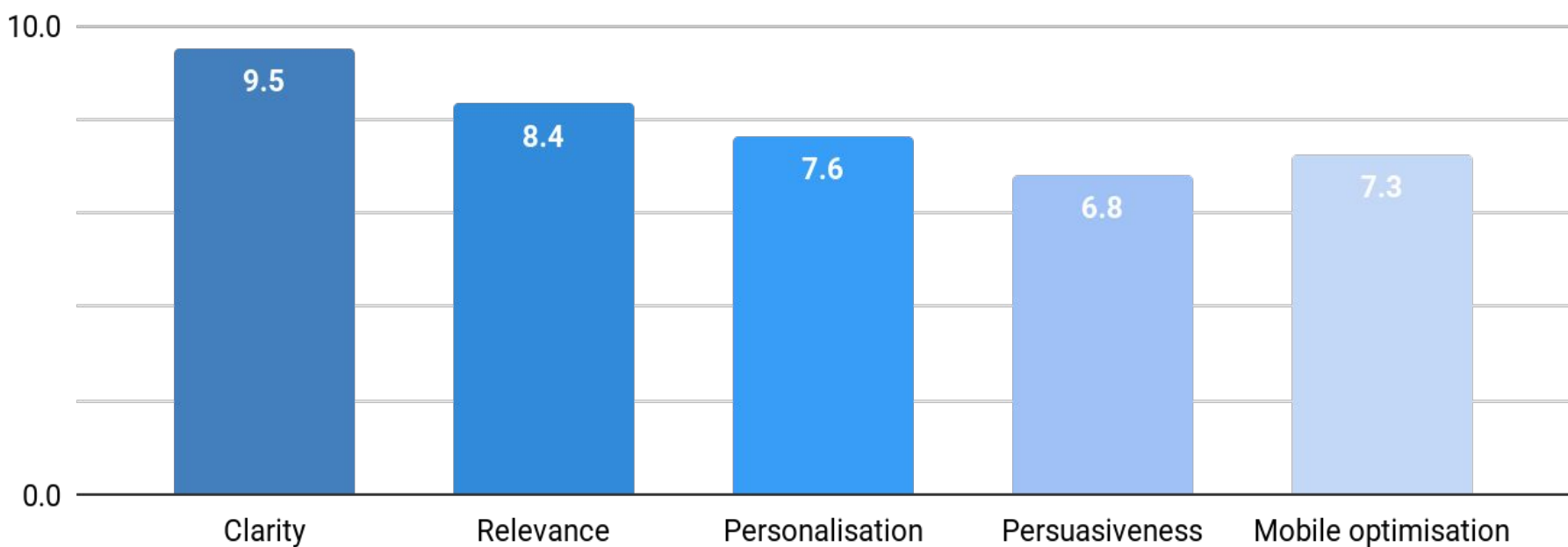
Distribution of communication quality scores by enquiry



Values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Your sub-scores for communication quality

These scores represent the average results for responses that were received.



Scores are indexed to 10 for ease of comparison.

Key findings

- All communications were rated as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- There is an opportunity for Example University to improve persuasiveness and personalisation in its enquiry communications.

"They asked for the student ID which was confusing, and did not answer about the costs, but the other information was helpful."

– Mexico mystery shopper

"My call was handled thoroughly. I am impressed with the prompt, efficient and super friendly response."

– Nepal mystery shopper

Your score for follow-up

This criteria measures whether an institution follows up in a timely way after responding to an initial enquiry.

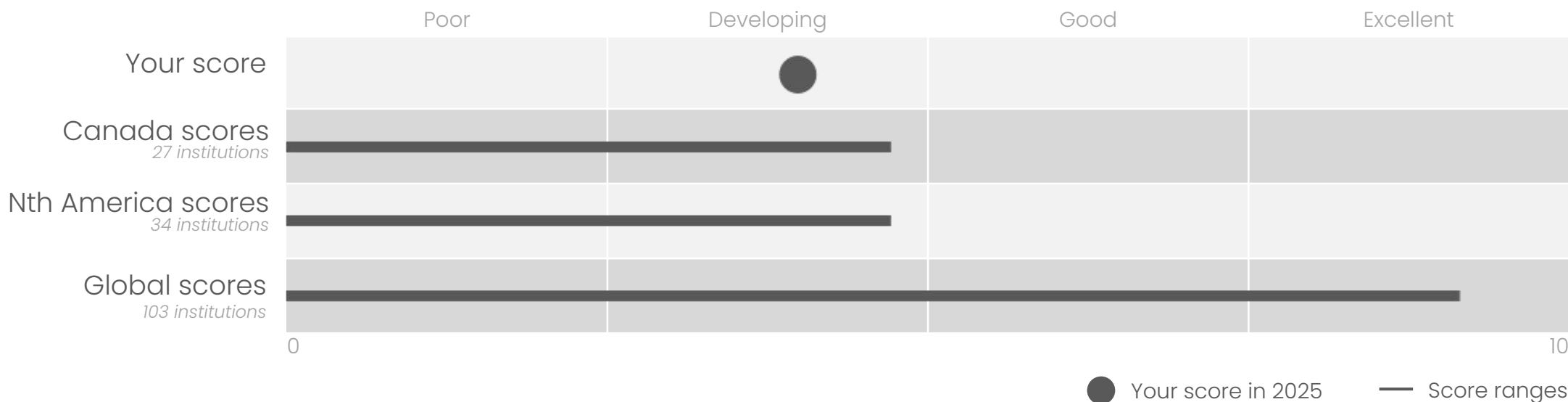
Mystery shoppers were asked whether any communications were received within two weeks of the initial reply to their enquiry. Too often institutions view enquiries as tasks to be completed, rather than as potential students with whom a relationship can be built. The purpose of this criteria is to understand if institutions are capitalising on the opportunity of a new lead and take a proactive step to progress the relationship with that student.

Scores are out of 10 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Key findings

- Example University scored less than half of the available points for follow-up, placing in the ‘developing’ range on our scale of excellence.
- Of the 17 students who received a reply to their enquiry, only 5 received a further communication from Example University. These included all web form enquirers from China, one from The Philippines, and an email enquirer from Mexico. These students received one nurture email in the two weeks following resolution of their enquiry
- Four students received invitations from Example University regional managers in their area to chat further and discuss any questions about studying at Example University. This was viewed favourably by most of the students, who found this personal follow-up very helpful.
- No further communications were received by students who enquired via phone, WhatsApp or peer-to-peer.

How your score compares



“I really liked that they followed up in Spanish, and it’s a good starting point to schedule a videochat. This makes me feel confident to share further questions during that meeting.”

– Mexico mystery shopper

Your score for impact

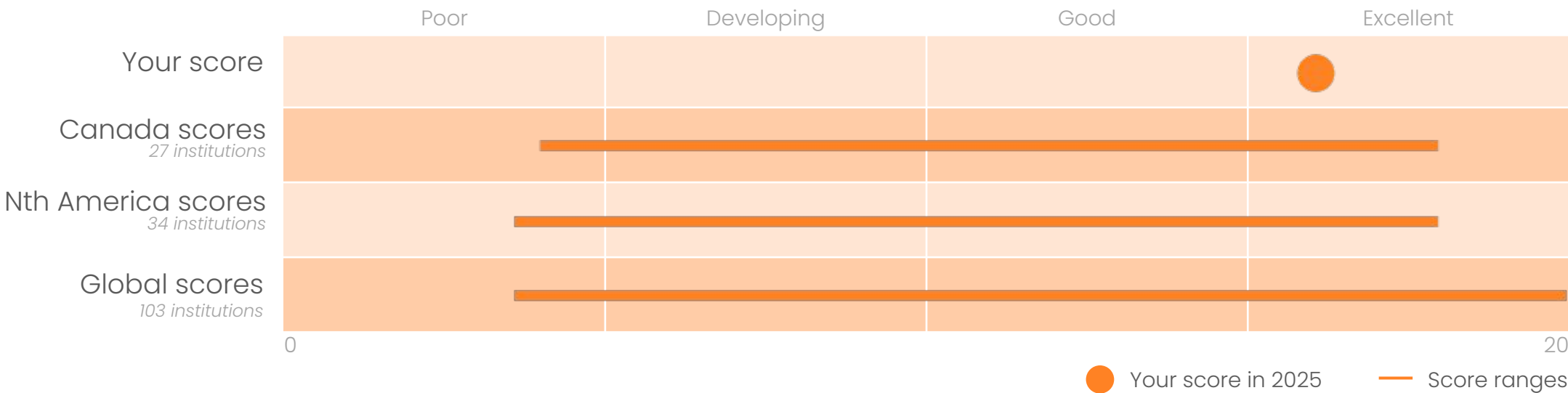
This criteria measures student sentiment and their level of interest after the enquiry experience.

Mystery shoppers were asked to describe their emotional state after interacting with each institution and to indicate how likely they would be to continue engaging with the institution. It is a subjective assessment based on the feelings and preferences of each mystery shopper.

This criteria helps institutions to understand the potential impact of their communications on recruitment outcomes.

Scores are out of 20 and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

How your score compares



Key findings

- Example University’s score for impact placed within the ‘excellent’ range. This score is at the top end of the Canada and North America ranges, and higher than the global benchmark.
- 13 out of the 18 mystery shoppers rated their overall experience with Example University as positive, and most went on to say they would be very likely to continue engaging with the College. Students valued the fast response times and felt they got to experience firsthand Example University’s commitment to students. Example University’s caring staff, clear information and tailored nurture emails from regional staff left a lasting impression on most.
- Of the three mystery shoppers who gave neutral ratings, two cited a somewhat impersonal feel and a lack of follow-up. One student from The Philippines was put off by the follow-up email they received which also contained information about another institution.

- Student sentiment improved again this year, with just over half reporting a positive experience. Perceptions varied by region:
 - Students were most satisfied after interactions with institutions in ANZ, with 64% rating their experience positively.
 - In the UK, final impressions were mixed. Welsh institutions stood out as a clear favourite, with 3 in 5 mystery shoppers reporting a positive experience.
 - Only 2 in 5 students gave a positive rating for institutions in North America – although Canadian institutions were viewed more favourably than those in the US.
- While rankings, price, course availability and location are key drivers of study decisions, student experience cannot be underestimated. When students weigh up institutions with similar offerings, customer service can be the differentiating factor.

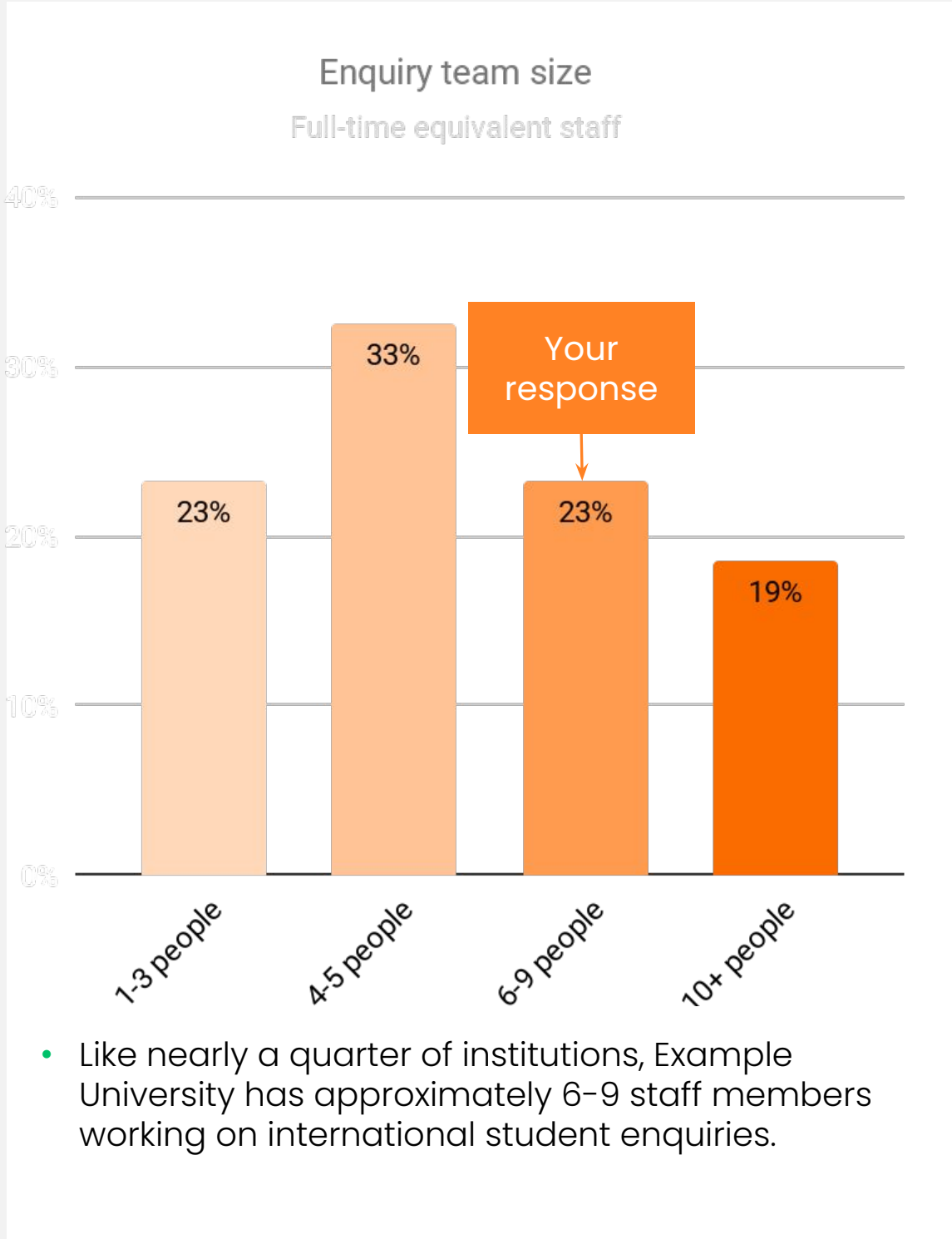
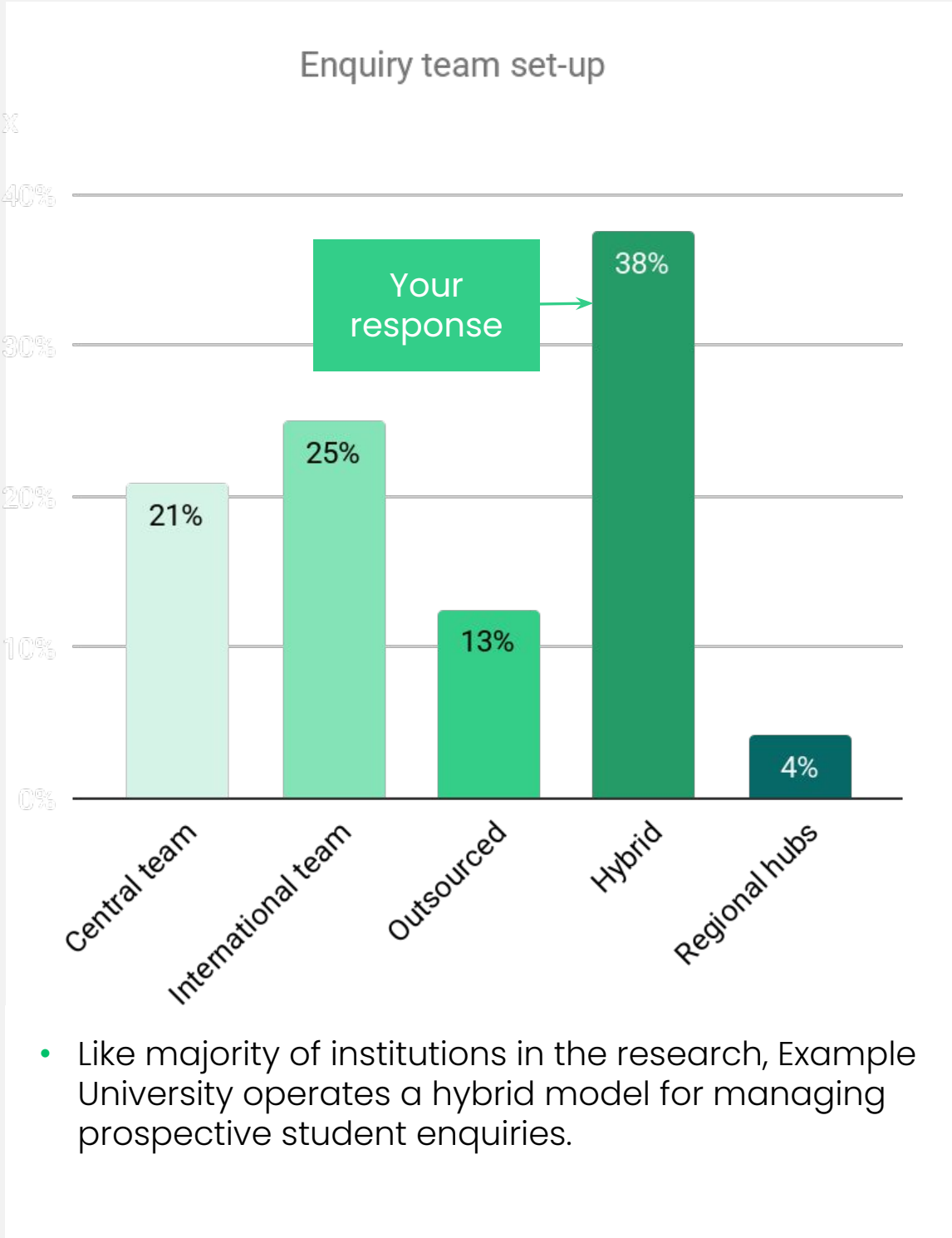
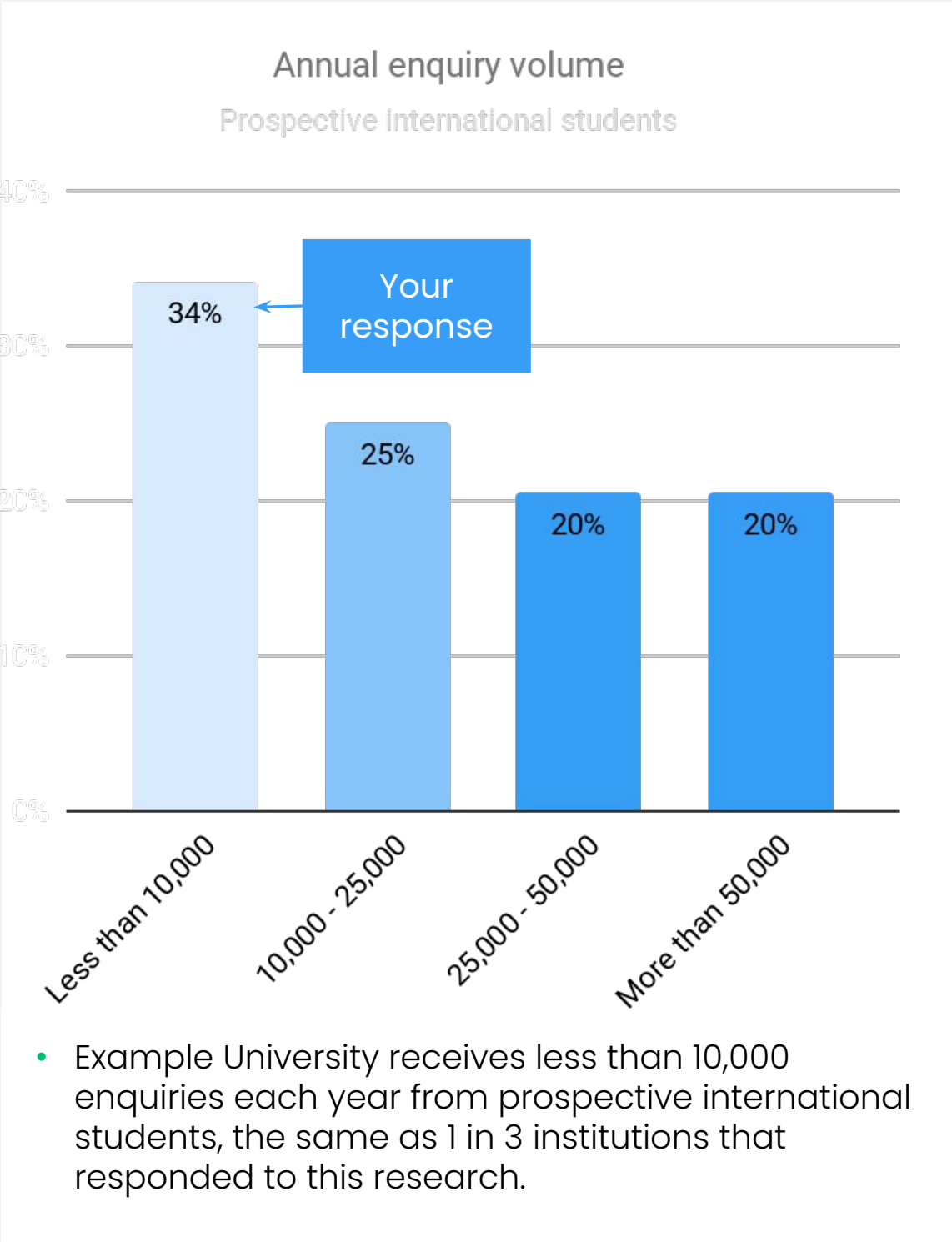
“The response was well composed and I am clear on the next steps. Some follow-up would have been good, but I consider this as one of my top options.”

– India mystery shopper

Your resourcing

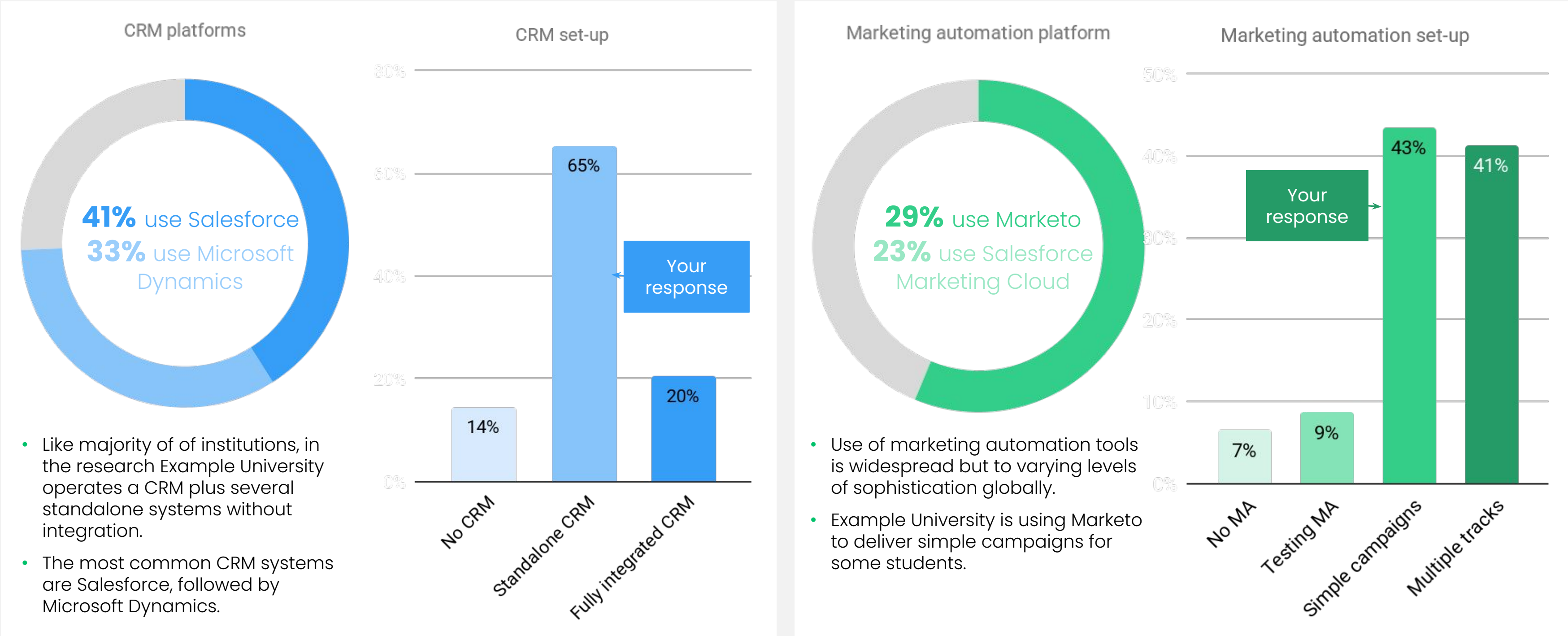
How your resourcing compares

Below are the responses provided by Example University on the resourcing of international student enquiry management compared with others in the global sample.



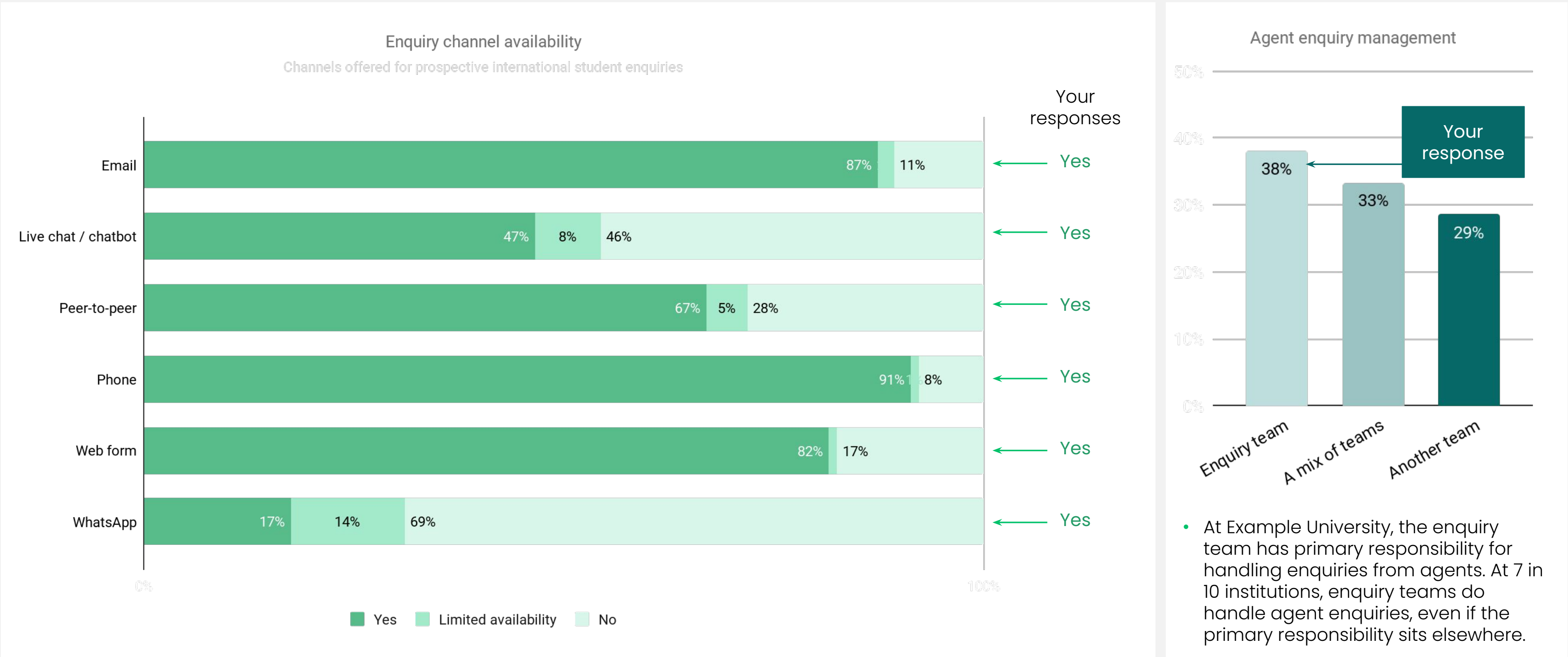
How your technology compares

Below are the responses provided by Example University on lead management technology compared with others in the global sample.



How your scope compares

Below are the responses provided by Example University on the different channels used for international student enquiries and areas with responsibility for handling agent enquiries compared with others in the global sample.



Next steps

Recommendations

The 2025 Enquiry Experience Tracker research indicates that Example University is delivering a superior prospect experience.

Here are some tactical recommendations that Example University can implement to maintain this level of performance as student needs change.

1

Build confidence with an auto-reply

You can't always answer every enquiry straight away. An auto-reply lets students know you've received their message and sets expectations with an estimated response time. Adding video content or social links can keep them engaged while they wait. This simple step helps avoid frustration, especially when your team is busy or away.

2

Replace email addresses with smart enquiry forms

Email makes it harder to collect the right data, capture marketing consent and trigger timely follow-up. A smart enquiry form can do all of that automatically. Use forms to prioritise leads, route them to the right team and kick off nurture campaigns straight away. You'll reduce manual handling and make sure valuable prospects don't get lost in spam or missed altogether.

3

Follow up with high-value students within five days

Take a proactive approach and get back in touch with all qualified prospects shortly after responding to their initial enquiry. A personal email or message with an offer of further assistance conveys a feeling of care and makes students feel valued. Email marketing campaigns help ensure your institution stays top of mind while students work through the decision-making process.

4

Explain why students should choose your institution

Every communication you have with a prospective student is a chance to persuade them to choose your institution. Consider your unique selling points and how they relate to the needs and motivations of different types of prospective students. Update your templates and scripts so your proposition is presented in a clear and compelling way.

We're here to help

The recommendations included in this report will go a long way towards helping you improve the prospective student experience at your institution. However, we understand that recommendations are not always easy to implement.

Edified and UniQuest are here to help if you need.



Communications audit

Edified can take an in-depth look at the communications that your prospects receive or encounter across key touchpoints. This may include advertising, email, websites, systems, social media, phone, chat and print.

We analyse your current communications through the student lens. Our report provides a star rating to show the effectiveness of each channel, and a set of actions you can take to improve.

We can even assist with fully drafted content if required.



Enquiry management review

With a view on the entire student life cycle, Edified can map out and evaluate your current enquiry management practices and the student experience being delivered.

We analyse your current enquiry management model, resourcing, process, content and technology.

Our report will include clear recommendations for improving enquiry and lead management so that you can deliver better student satisfaction and conversion outcomes.



Sales training for conversion and contact centre teams

Edified offers face-to-face sales training specific to the education sector. Equip your team with confidence in relationship-based sales so they can authentically sell your institution and achieve a higher conversion ratio.

Our workshops build skills that can be applied across job roles and to all types of communications, including emails, presentations and meetings.



Student conversion services

UniQuest partners with higher education institutions to bring all the capabilities needed to deliver personalised student engagement journeys at scale and without interruption, no matter what.

Acting as an extension of your team, we apply the insights, an expert team, and the technology to deliver proactive and personalised student engagement and support. Our proven approach maximises the enrolment and retention of students, from the first enquiry through to admissions, and onto study.

Webinar invitation

Join us for a preview of the global results

Tune in for an exclusive look at the results of the 2025 Enquiry Experience Tracker.

You'll get the first look at global insights and best practice trends from this year's mystery shopping research.

 [Register now](#)



Shweta Chandan
EET Project Manager
Edified



Elissa Newall
Senior Partner
Edified



Jennifer Parsons
Chief Market and
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Rina Magar
International
student
Mystery shopper



Junne Ndanu
International
student
mystery shopper

Global results webinar
Thursday 2 October 2025
8am CDT (will be recorded)

2026 Enquiry Experience Tracker

Join the 2026 domestic student research round

Understand how well your institution responds to enquiries from domestic prospects and how that compares to service levels for international students

How consistent are your service levels for varying student types?

How effective is your institution in engaging with domestic prospects compared with local competitors?

What can you learn from other institutions around the world?

Join the 2026 research round

Early bird registrations close on 31 December. Register early to get:

- a 10% discount
- the opportunity for input on the personas and enquiry channels for the 2026 research

 [Register from 1 Nov](#)



Thank you

If you have any questions,
please do get in touch.



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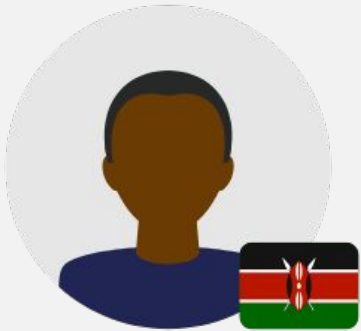


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Your communications

Your enquiry communications



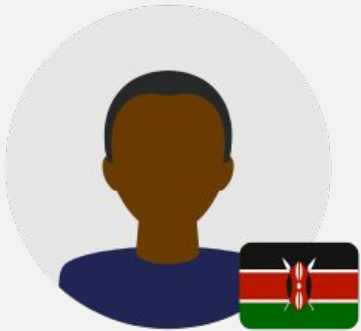
High school student
Kenya
Peer-to-peer

“They clearly explained everything and made me feel the shool is well-equipped to support students academically and personally. There was no follow-up, but the experience increased my interest and confidence in Example University.”

– Junne

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



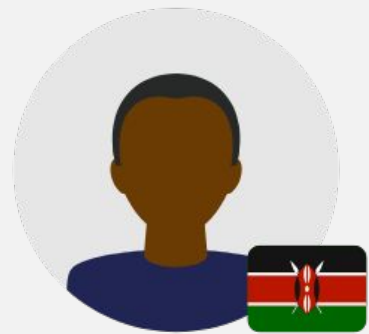
High school student
Kenya
Peer-to-peer

“It was nice to know there is a mosque as that shows good inclusivity, but I don't have a good impression from this inquiry experience. I feel the ambassador did it just for formality and as needed.”

– Omar

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



High school student
Kenya
Peer-to-peer

"She was very kind and knowledgeable, and good at figuring out what was important to me. They made the school seem very welcoming. I wish they had followed up with more ways to engage."

– Grace

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University student
China
Enquiry form

"A very good impression. They answered all my questions quickly and accurately. The follow-up took care of my needs as a Chinese international student. Studying at Example University would be a good experience, and with no application fee, I would definitely apply."

– Chao

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University student
China
Enquiry form

"I really like how they responded to me quickly and answered all questions, and later the Chinese recruitment manager also followed up. I am impressed by how important students' experience is for them!"

– Xinhui

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University student
China
Enquiry form

“They tried to contact me via phone to discuss my application, which made me feel I am valued. A very engaging response.”

– Yin

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



High school graduate
India
WhatsApp

“The response was absolutely tailored to my queries. The tone was warm and it seemed welcoming. I’m clear about the next steps which will in turn give me more clarity on my eligibility criteria.”

– Aditi

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



High school graduate
India
Email

“Positive and welcoming, but the lack of personalised feedback about my eligibility made me unsure of my next steps. While the financial incentives create a good impression, more tailored guidance would have strengthened my confidence.”

– Arjun

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



High school graduate
India
Email

“The response was really tailored well and included information on scholarships and the application process. I feel like I would be welcomed at a campus visit and was eager to go ahead with it.”

– Aeldra

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Onshore sibling
Nepal
Phone

"I have a good impression of the institution; they sound welcoming, as I was invited to visit the admissions department anytime. I felt like they care for the students who are studying in their institution."

– Neeru

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Onshore sibling
Nepal
Phone

"The agent shared information about housing facilities and guided me to the website to navigate details. She also pulled up the IRCC website to explain visa processing times. It was incredibly helpful—above and beyond what I expected."

– Pravash

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Onshore sibling
Nepal
Phone

"The staff was friendly and answered all my questions. They encouraged me to email for my specific country requirements. The warm, interactive and helpful conversation gave a good impression."

– Rina

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University graduate
The Philippines
Live chat

“While it answered all questions and gave info about the Career Compass, the lack of tailored information about scholarships or job outcomes felt a bit generic. The tone was positive and welcoming, so a good impression overall.”

– Jonnah

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University graduate
The Philippines
Enquiry Form

“Loved that the messages were clear and concise, felt like they answered all my questions but could be a bit more engaging. The follow-up was good because it was very personal and better than others I have received.”

– Katrina

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



University graduate
The Philippines
Live chat

"The overall experience was very positive. Example University provided clear, supportive information that made me feel confident. The friendly tone and comprehensive details gave a strong impression of their commitment to student success."

– Christian

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Parent of a school student
Mexico
Email

“Their website was good, their reply was even better, and their follow-up in Spanish made it clear that they are a great institution and the right option. I feel confident, and that is the most meaningful factor as a parent.”

– Sergio

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Parent of a school student
Mexico
Email

“The response was helpful although confusing about the student ID. I would have appreciated some follow up to encourage me to engage further.”

– Renata

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Your enquiry communications



Parent of a school student
Mexico
Email

“It was easy to find the email address, but they never replied, so there is no interaction to assess.”

– Alejandro

No response

This is an example report. In a real report, this page would include a copy of the communications received by the mystery shoppers

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of institutions

Australia









Appendix 1: List of institutions

Canada





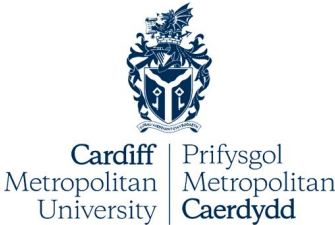
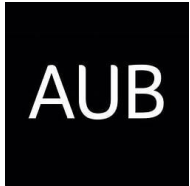






Appendix 1: List of institutions

United Kingdom




Appendix 1: List of institutions

United Kingdom (cont)





New Zealand



United States





Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

Kenya – Peer to peer



FINAL YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



KENYA



PEER TO PEER

Grace Samuel
17 years old
Lives in Nairobi

In the final year of high school at Brookhurst International School in Nairobi, Kenya. Is preparing to go abroad for further studies in 2026.

Parents chose an international school as they were always keen for their child to study abroad.

Interested in a Bachelor Degree in Engineering. Living in a vibrant city and having a good experience on campus is important.

Enquiry topics

- Internships
- Accomodation
- Local city life / life on campus

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

China – Enquiry form



UNIVERSITY
STUDENT



CHINA



ENQUIRY FORM

Yin Zhang
20 years old
Lives in Guangzhou

Currently in the final year of a Bachelor’s in International Business at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, China.

Planning to move away from home for postgraduate studies to gain independence.

Interested in a Masters in Business that has good career prospects in the chosen study destination or upon returning home to China.

Enquiry topics

- Fees and scholarships
- Chinese international students / cultural diversity
- Career prospects

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

India – WhatsApp



HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATE



INDIA



WHATSAPP

Aditi Deshpande
18 years old
Lives in Pune

Completed high school last year under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) with good grades. Has also completed an english language test in preparation to study abroad.

Many cousins and friends have shared positive experiences about studying abroad, so eager to explore similar opportunities.

Interested in a Bachelor Degree in science and wants to understand how to go about it and seeking guidance.

Enquiry topics

- Admission requirements
- Admissions process
- Alternative programs or pathways
- Visa timeline

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

Nepal – Phone



ONSHORE
SIBLING



NEPAL



PHONE

Neeru Giri
26 years old
Lives in Canada

Currently completing a degree in Canada and researching study options for their sibling, who is in final year of high school in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Parents are keen for the younger sibling to study in Canada as well, to ensure support, safety and security.

The sibling is interested in pursuing a Bachelor Degree in business and is exploring suitable programs.

Enquiry topics

- Admissions requirements
- Visa process and timeline
- Authorised education agent

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

The Philippines – Live chat



RECENT UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE



PHILIPPINES



LIVE CHAT

Mia Catalan
22 years old
Lives in Manila

Graduated with a Bachelor in Computer Science from University of Santo Tomas and is now exploring opportunities to pursue postgraduate studies abroad.

Achieved first-class Honours and is hoping to qualify for a scholarship to help reduce tuition costs.

Interested in masters programs in the field of information technology (IT) that allow opportunities to gain practical experience alongside academic learning.

Enquiry topics

- Scholarships
- Part-time work opportunities while studying
- Study destination/graduate work visa
- Study destination/employment prospects

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

Mexico – Email



PARENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



MEXICO



EMAIL

Giorgio Patino
45 years old
Lives in Mexico City

Has a 17-year-old daughter who is completing high school soon. Parents are keen to send her abroad for further study and to gain international experience.

Have not yet decided on the study destination and are researching options. Safety of their child is high priority along with English language support.

Interested in bachelor programs in the arts field.

Enquiry topics

- Safety and student support
- Campus accommodation
- English test and scores
- Admission process / application deadline

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

Germany – Email



WORKING
PROFESSIONAL



GERMANY



EMAIL

Isabel Holtmann
31 years old
Lives in Frankfurt

Graduated from Frankfurt School of Finance & Management six years ago with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Currently working as a Business Analyst at an IT systems and solutions company and looking to advance career. Thinking of moving abroad along with spouse to explore opportunities.

Interested in pursuing an MBA for a career edge and to gain international experience.

Enquiry topics

- Industry partnerships
- Job prospects
- Fees deadlines
- Visa process and rules for spouse

This is an indication of the type of student represented by mystery shoppers. Where needed, specific details were adjusted to suit each target institution.

Appendix 3: Definitions and assumptions

How were mystery shopping personas and scenarios developed?

Mystery shopping personas were informed by UniQuest’s student behaviour data, and insights from prospective student enquiries handled on behalf of UK universities in 2024. Mystery shopping enquiries have been modelled on real enquiries managed by UniQuest from international students who enquired to UK universities.

Persona development also included consultation with institutions that signed up for the research during the ‘early bird’ registration period. We considered trends relating to top recruitment markets, study areas, enquiry topics and enquiry channels.

Which contact details did the mystery shoppers use when making enquiries to institutions?

Every institution who registered to be part of the Enquiry Experience Tracker research completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the year to share their contact details. This information was provided to mystery shoppers for the purpose of making their enquiries.

Mystery shoppers were also asked to review each website and locate contact details themselves. This information was used to evaluate findability of each institution’s enquiry channels.

What happens if our institution doesn’t offer a particular enquiry channel?

Where a particular enquiry channel is not offered by an institution, institutions could nominate a substitution for mystery shopping. Substitutions are not included in the calculation of benchmarks unless they are one of the following exceptions:

- a web enquiry form substituted for an email address
- an email substitution for a web enquiry form

These substitutions are included because the channels deliver a comparable experience for students and can therefore be evaluated side by side.

How is live chat defined?

Live chat is defined as any tool that delivered a synchronous and immediate chat experience within the institution’s website. This includes chatbots.

Tools such as Unibuddy or The Ambassador Platform (TAP) are not included due to their asynchronous nature. Mobile apps (e.g. WhatsApp) and social media messaging (e.g. Facebook Messenger) are not included because the interactions take place on a separate platform to the institution’s website.

How is peer-to-peer defined?

Peer-to-peer is defined as any channel that allows prospective students to communicate with current students. Typically, this involves tools such as Unibuddy or The Ambassador Platform (TAP) but can also include bespoke apps, web enquiry forms and social media managed by students.

Why are there different sample sizes for each persona?

The sample size noted against each persona varies because not all personas were mystery shopped for every participating institution. This is due to two different reasons:

1. Not all channels are offered by every institution. Where an institution has substituted an alternative enquiry channel, the data is not included in benchmark.
2. Institutions were able to select six personas (from a list of seven) for mystery shopping. Not every institution made the same selections.

Appendix 3: Definitions and assumptions

How long did the mystery shoppers wait for a response?

A maximum allowable response time was set for each channel. After this time was exceeded, mystery shoppers abandoned their enquiry.

The response time was counted as the time between when the enquiry was initiated and the time the mystery shopper was connected with someone who could help with their enquiry (i.e. an actual response, not an automated reply).

The maximum allowable response time varied by channel:

- Live chat and phone: 15 minutes
- Peer-to-peer and WhatsApp: 1 week
- Email and enquiry form: 3 weeks

Live chat and phone enquiries were only placed during the institution’s business hours or published service hours. Where technical or connection errors were encountered, a second attempt was made.

How were responses scored if an institution did not respond in the minimum timeframe?

If no response was received within the minimum allowable time frame, a zero score was given for two criteria: responsiveness and communication quality. The remaining criteria were scored as usual.

How were responses scored if multiple responses were received?

On occasion, mystery shoppers received more than one email reply from an institution in response to their enquiry. In this situation, only the first response was evaluated for communication quality. Any additional response was recorded as a follow-up communication.

How was communication quality evaluated?

Communication quality was evaluated by mystery shoppers according to a scorecard developed by Edified. Scores were checked and moderated by Edified communication experts.

There were 25 different evaluation criteria covering clarity, relevance, personalisation, persuasiveness and mobile friendliness. The scorecard included a mix of objective and subjective questions, such as:

- Did the staff member ask questions to find out more about you?
- What was the tone of the communication?
- Did the staff member tell you their name?

How was ‘follow-up’ communication defined?

Follow-up communication was defined as any contact from an institution within two weeks after the mystery shopper’s enquiry was responded to. All communication channels and types of communication were considered.

How was impact evaluated?

This criteria reflects the sentiment of mystery shoppers after interacting with each institution. It is a subjective assessment based on emotions. Mystery shoppers are asked to indicate how likely they would be to continue engaging with each institution. This criteria helps institutions understand the potential impact of their communications on recruitment outcomes.

What is lost opportunity score?

Some institutions did not respond to all the mystery shopping enquiries placed with them. The ‘lost opportunity’ score is an estimate of how many points higher an institution’s overall Enquiry Experience Score might have been if all enquiries had received a response.